

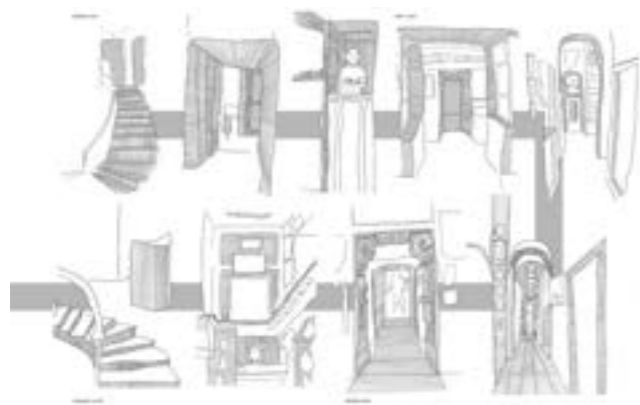
HOME TO MUSEUM

by HANISAH AIMI BINTI HAMZAH

Is it possible to convert a home, a space so private and close to our heart to a museum, a public space? Will the users be able to detect the different function of the spaces? Does it create conflict in terms of the space arrangement? When it is quite clear on the definition and purpose of both spaces, can the space be successful with its “new” purposes?

Sir John Soane's Museum is an example of converting a private space into a public space. Sir John Soane, a professor and practising architect who is also an avid collector of art and artefacts, has converted his home into a museum.

However, one should not view this conversion as any other conversion due to the fact that Sir John Soane has designed his home as his own personal museum and library. During his time as a professor, he often opened his home to his students to benefit from his collection. Walls and narrow corridors are fully utilized to display his collections creating a tight and cramped experience which contradicts the nature of public space.



Soane included many of his design features and principles of a public building when renovating his home. He applied the same features and aspects that were both on Bank of England and Dulwich Picture Gallery (he was the architect) on the scheme of his home.



One of the examples is when he used the same concept of the skylight and natural lighting to the Breakfast Room. Another example of Soane using a principle of public building is the Colonnade. Colonnade is the area with Corinthian Columns supporting the mezzanine floor. The massive columns create a massive contrast on such a small sized area. Soane manipulated the concept of scale in this house when he introduced the columns in. The columns helped to frame the path entering the Picture Room. Two obelisks that were placed in the Sepulchral Chamber used to be in Lincoln's Inn Field, which was a public park situated in front of this museum. Spatial experience were created between private and public space adding value to this conversion.

Soane's home-museum cannot act as independent entities that have no relationship with one another. It functions well as a museum because Soane has created harmony in public and private space design principles. Converting a conventional home may not work as well as Soane museum.



GALLERY

